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TO THE
YEOMEN
OF THE

COUNTY OF SURREY.

*On the late County Meeting, and
on other Matters connected with
that Meeting.*

Kensington, 12th February, 1823.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Addresses and Letters, which I have written for publication, amount to many hundreds; in the writing of many of them I have been filled with pleasing sensations; but, certainly, upon no occasion of the kind have I ever felt greater pleasure than that which I feel at present. The petition which I had the honour to submit for the approbation or rejection of the great agricultural county of Norfolk, had excited discussion in every quarter and corner of this kingdom. I had in my pocket, when at the meeting, newspapers from Ireland and from Scotland; all containing something or other, good or bad, relating to that petition. The document treated of matters of the greatest possible importance; it contained numerous allegations; laid down several great princi-

ples; traced the evils of the country back to their causes; delineated those causes; pointed out and prayed for a whole body of remedies, some immediate and some more distant.

It would have been surprising indeed, if such a document, sanctioned by the voice of a great county, had failed to excite general attention, and to call forth more or less criticism. Coming from ME, then, what must necessarily be the consequence! There was, in the first place, the low, the common place pride of the nobility and gentry of the county. In the next place, there was that local prejudice which would reject any thing, no matter what, because it came from the hands of a stranger. Then there was, the *envy of the "race that write;"* and, generally speaking, a baser race God in his wrath against nations never made. There are three hundred newspapers in England; and I verily believe that there are not three out of the three hundred the malignant proprietors of which would not gladly hear that a thunderbolt had fallen upon my head, or that an assassin had stuck a dagger in my heart. For twenty years I have been openly combating this ignorant, this base, this corrupt press. For twenty years I have been denouncing it, as the great enemy of the happiness of the

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people. The distresses which we now behold never would have existed had it not been for this press. Its delusions have been the great curse of the country. A dreadful scourge it has been, and as such it has always been represented by me. For many many years my representations were useless. Then the conductors of this dreadful scourge treated me, either with disdainful silence, or with scornful reproach. At last, **EVENTS**; events to which I have always looked forward with confidence, have come to verify my predictions and to give the stamp of authority to all my opinions. Now, therefore, this baleful press beholds me with that **ENVY**; that passion which the poet calls the eldest born of hell. The low and ignorant wretches who own this press see themselves flung aside as a heap of rubbish unworthy of attention, while the whole mass of intelligence in the country is directing its eyes towards what falls from my pen.

Strange, indeed, would it have been, then, if this whole band had not cordially joined in its outcries against a document, which was, in every point of view, one of the most important that could come from the hand of any private individual. This petition had been attacked in the county of Norfolk itself. A **PEER** of that county, and one of the county members had been holding meetings in barns and other places, condemning this petition of the county. Frightened by the daring and unprincipled press in London, they had run into holes and corners to condemn that, which in their hearts they approved of, and which had

been openly sanctioned, by the greatest body of real yeomen that, perhaps, were ever assembled under one roof since England was England. In the county of **HEREFORD**, I had proposed the same petition. It was, in fact, the petition of that county also. By trick; by joekeying; by low and dirty contrivance, the Lord Lieutenant was induced to dissolve the meeting in haste; so that no petition at all appeared to be agreed to by the meeting; no petition was by the meeting ordered to be presented to either House of Parliament; and the petition, which it was pretended was the petition of the meeting, has been handing about for signatures, just the same as if there had been no county meeting at all.

Nevertheless, the base London press represented this petition to have been *regularly carried by a large majority*, and most industriously represented me to have experienced a *defeat*. Yet, even in that county, a petition similar to that of the county of Norfolk is signing; and will, I venture to say, have more *real* signatures to it, than those that will stand at the bottom of the pretended county petition.

Things were in this state when I saw a meeting of the county of Surrey announced. This was the occasion to put the petition to the test. There were, however, singular disadvantages attending this test. I had no doubt at all, as to the soundness of your judgment, or as to your spirit to pronounce it impartially; but I felt myself greatly embarrassed by knowing that a petition had been prepared by my Lord King, for whom, though my own respect was very great,

I knew that it did not exceed yours. His lordship did not, as he honestly told us, quite concur with me in opinion upon the main point; and this was a disadvantage greater than any other that could possibly have occurred.

The Norfolk petition embraced the subject of church property, that of crown lands, that of army reductions, that of sinecures and pensions and other emoluments divided amongst them by the great; and, lastly, and most important of all, reduction of the interest of the debt and a rectifying of contracts between man and man. The subsequent part of the Norfolk petition; that which related to *suspension of process*, was of less importance; and besides, the day was so unfavourable, that a debate upon numerous minute points would have been wholly impracticable. The petition as moved by my Lord King and seconded by Mr. LEECH embraced all the great topics of the Norfolk petition, with the exception of *contracts public and private*.

This was the great subject. It was upon this subject that barn and hole meetings in Norfolk had declaimed. It was upon this subject that the London newspapers, those volcanoes of falsehood and filth had been vomiting forth for five whole weeks. It was upon this subject that every crafty jew had been declaiming, and with regard to it, every cowardly landlord had been shuffling and skulking. And it was upon this subject that I was determined not to flinch. If I were to be condemned, I was resolved that the condemnation should be made as signal as possible by coming from the lips of the county in

which I was born. The proposition that I moved was this: "*That an equitable adjustment with regard to the public debt, and with regard to all contracts between man and man, is absolutely necessary to the defence of the country against foreign foes, and to the restoration of its internal tranquillity.*" This was the proposition which had been branded as foolish, as dishonest, as swindling, and had been loaded with every epithet applicable to acts of fraud the most odious, and tyranny the most cruel. I do not go too far when I say that a greater mass of abuse had been heaped upon me on account of this proposition; that five weeks had seen the author of this proposition loaded with more abuse, more foul accusation, more vile names, more of every species of opprobrium than ever was heard to fall on the head of any individual, in the course of that individual's whole life.

I was by no means unaware of the effect which this torrent of abuse would inevitably have. Three hundred newspapers backed by silly and cowardly landlords at their hole-and-corner meetings; and these again backed by bawling clap-trap orators in a place, which I think unworthy of being named: I was, by no means, unaware of the inevitable effect of all these; but I saw you assembling; and I was resolved to appeal from this host of calumniators, to the good sense, the integrity and the spirit of the county of Surrey, in County Meeting regularly and legally assembled.

Judge, therefore, Gentlemen, of the satisfaction I derive from

that which may be fairly called your unanimous decision! It was impossible to calculate to a nicety the effect that might have been produced upon your minds by the volumes of foul calumnies, of which I have spoken. Under other circumstances, therefore, I might have hesitated; but I had a duty to perform, not only to myself, but also to the Yeomen of the County of Norfolk; and I never had in my whole life neglected any such duty. In deciding this question, you have decided (and have decided for the whole nation, too) on the character and conduct of those who have been for five weeks railing against the Norfolk petition; and you have given the strongest of all invitations to other counties, to follow your excellent example. Let the genius of folly and the father of him now do their worst. You have proved that you are proof against both. Let the jews of the Change and the jews of the press re-echo their howlings. You have told them that you are resolved that they shall not oust you from your homesteads and send you to the workhouse. But, above all things, you have told this, at once stupid and knavish press, that you are no longer to be deluded by it; that you despise alike its blandishments and its abuse; that you would be ashamed to be worthy of its praises; and that, as David said of Shimei, so say you of it. "Shimei came forth and cursed still as he came. And Abishai said, Why should this *dead dog* curse my lord? Let me go over, I prithee, and take off his head. And David said, Let him alone; let him curse." So say you of

this tribe of Shimei; this many-headed monster of the press.

I propose now to address you on some matters very closely connected with the proceedings of the meeting. But let me first observe, that the thanks of us all, and particularly of me, are due to Mr. BENNET. To be sure it would have been acting a very unworthy part, entertaining the opinions that he does, to decline to second the proposition. But, unworthy as that part would have been, I am of opinion that it would have been acted by nineteen out of every twenty men in the kingdom in his situation. He had the good sense, and which was, in such a case ten times more, he had the courage to set at defiance a host of prejudices, and to set at defiance also, all the poisonous streams of the corrupt and stock-jobbing press. Mr. BENNET's seconding my proposition is to be considered as a thing of great importance to the country. Few will be beastly enough to suppose that he can want that revolution which has been knavishly or foolishly asserted to be sought after by me. I, indeed, want a revolution of a mischievous kind full as little as he does; but there is this difference, that some men there may be to ascribe the wish to me with a chance of being believed; whereas it is impossible for any man to ascribe the wish to him without being treated with scorn.

There is another observation to make upon this conduct of Mr. BENNET, the *brother of a peer*, seconding a proposition made by me. The vile, the base press, think, perhaps, that they gall him by speaking of him as my "se-

conder;" the seconder of a man who was *born* to any thing, certainly, rather than title and rank. Now, it would be no dishonour, I suppose, to second Mr. HUSKISSON, Mr. CANNING, Lord LIVERPOOL, or the Lord CHANCELLOR. No dishonour to second either of them; yet, they were as little born to title and rank as myself. The question of pre-eminence upon such an occasion, rested upon the degree of understanding of the parties relative to the matter to be proposed, to be discussed, and to be decided on; and, in this respect, may not I, your countryman, claim the undisputed superiority? When Mr. SUMNER and Mr. DENNISON, your two Members were, one after the other, ascribing the present distress, in part, at least, to *Mr. Peel's Bill*, when they were both declaring that they had had their doubts at the time of passing the Bill, and when Mr. SUMNER was very justly observing, that all men, without the exception of Ministers and Parliaments, were liable to error; when these gentlemen were making these acknowledgements, and expressing their deep sorrow that that Bill had been passed without concomitant measures; when you, Gentlemen, and when I heard this, would it have been *arrogant* in me, if I had reminded them, that, year after year, once a month, at least, for full twelve years, I warned the country of its dangers from the causes connected with this fatal Bill; that for five subsequent years I was incessant in these warnings; and that a year and a half before the Bill was passed, and then again at twelve months before it was

passed, I not only warned them generally of the dangers of such a Bill; but depicted with the exactness of an expert painter from the life all the sorts of evils that would arise, and as much in detail as they could now be depicted, when they have actually arisen and are threatening to produce an absolute dissolution of this once happy community: if I had reminded them of these things, would it, I ask, have been *arrogant*? Yet I did not. No man stood more silent and unmoved than myself; but I am quite satisfied, that your minds were not idle at that moment; that you had the justice to remember these things; and that you also had the justice to determine that, of all men living, I was the man, in whom you ought, in this case, to place the highest degree of confidence.

Gentlemen, the history of our Government will tell you, that it is the taste of the aristocracy to raise by degrees, those that bend the knee before them; and when they have raised them, to become themselves, the slaves of their own creatures. It is very neatly observed by Swift, that crawling and climbing are performed in the same attitude. Look at a caterpillar. He creeps along the ground first, and then he climbs up to the altitude which he is desirous to attain. I may be as willing as any man to climb; but never since I had breath in my body have I, in any one calling of life, condescended to perform the previous ceremony of crawling. This ceremony, however, is, with our court and aristocracy absolutely indispensable; and hence, Gentlemen, the whole of

our calamities. This is the very root of them all. *Real talent will never crawl*; and, therefore, of real talent so very small a portion is brought into play for the benefit of the country. High birth is sometimes accompanied with talent; but how little must the quantity be, in proportion to that which impartial Nature has given to the millions! Shut the door against all those who will not crawl, and you have just that which we now behold: a Government proclaiming that over-production of food is the cause of the distress, while millions are upon the point of starvation for want.

Mr. BENNET, appears, upon this occasion to have departed from the crawling maxim; in which departure he certainly did himself a great deal of honour and will do the country a great deal of service. Perhaps, (and it is only, perhaps,) this may be the dawn of the reign of common sense, as applicable to these matters. I am aware of the vantage ground on which I stand. Not one inch will I crawl; and I know that if I live for five years, my triumph is complete. Those debts which Lord ELLENBOROUGH had the meanness, the unmanliness and the insolence to allude to; those debts, notwithstanding seventy thousand pounds earned with my own hand, and all swept away by the various persecutions exercised against me; those debts (of which, however, not a farthing remains) may all be safely put down to my resolution not to *crawl*. I have stood my ground against this whole body of aristocracy, and all their numerous tribes of creatures and dependents. Were I vindictive, I should say, what their own

wretched creatures are now saying: I should let the jews and jobbers take their estates, except the small portion that I wanted for myself; and see the present owners bind books like the French Count, whom I mentioned at the meeting. I see precisely how things will work. I shall do my duty to my country, totally regardless of all that has been done to myself. I have a deal to avenge; and the satisfaction I will have is this: this aristocracy, if not completely devoured by the jews, shall be rescued by me, and shall be *compelled to confess it*. I care not for their money or their estates; but I care for my fame, and that I will not fail to secure. They have no means of escape; no earthly means have they to save one single acre *without giving me a triumph*; without making every soul in England unhesitatingly acknowledge *my superiority*.

I have frequently said it, and, like other truths, which I have at different times promulgated, it is now generally believed, that no small portion of the evils of the country, are to be ascribed to the hostility towards me, which hostility has been felt and acted upon by the whole body of aristocracy and of power in this country. The measures which I have recommended, at various stages in this progress towards ruin, would, at each of those several stages, have put a stop to the ruin. It is impossible that that which was so clear to me; it is impossible that that, the truth of which I *demonstrated*, should not have been clearly seen by some others, at any rate; and amongst others there must have been some others

of authority and of influence. But, the measures were recommended *by me*. That was enough. And the maxim appears to have been, perish the country: "let ruin seize it: let it be annihilated, rather than witness the triumph of Cobbett." What but a feeling like this can have urged Lord SUFFIELD and Mr. COKE to stoop to the holding of meetings in barns and hovels, in order to condemn the petition of their own county? What but this stupid pride; what but this insane malignity could have induced these men to act this part? It was because they would not have it said that the county was *led by me*. And there are they condemning the proposition about the church property and the crown lands, at the very moment that you are receiving those propositions from Lord KING and Mr. LEECH; and, at the very moment, too, that Mr. HUME is openly and manfully declaring in Parliament, that he means to propose the adoption of legislative measures, consonant with those very propositions! Will these people accuse Mr. HUME of *fraudulent* and *revolutionary* designs? If they do, will Mr. Coke ever show his face before the people of Norfolk again? And if they do not, will not the history of their hole-and-corner meetings exhibit them as amongst the meanest of mankind?

Now, Gentlemen, let me say one word to you with regard to the addition to the petition, which was moved by me. A cry has been set up by the vile press, about the plundering of *widows* and of *orphans*. We are for plundering nobody. Mark the base malignity of our assailants.

Our proposition itself says, *equitable adjustment*; and all our arguments rest upon the justice of the proposition, and upon the monstrous injustice that is now going on. Widows and orphans! What, then, have landlords, have farmers, have the millions of half starved labourers no widows and no orphans belonging to their classes? Have the half broken tradesmen in the country towns, and the half perishing journeymen; have they no widows and no orphans belonging to their classes? Look at the falling down buildings in the country; look at the miserable cottages, and their miserable inhabitants living upon half-a-crown a-week. Then turn your eyes to the rows of fine houses, miles and miles in length, continually rising up, round this all-devouring *wen*; see the luxury and debauchery in which the tax-eating inhabitants of these houses live; see their very dogs feeding sumptuously, compared with the feeding of the labourer and his family: look at these things, and then talk to these hypocrites about widows and orphans: look at these things, and then ask yourselves if they can possibly go on, without producing a bloody revolution: look at these things, and then express, if you can, indignation sufficient at their consummate stupidity, or the consummate baseness of those landlords who have ascribed the Norfolk petition to revolutionary designs.

Mr. BROUGHAM, in a speech, which he made on last Tuesday week, was kind enough to ascribe the petitions of the people, and particularly the Norfolk petition, to the *errors* of the petitioners. I should tell you that Mr. BROUGHAM is a very kind gentleman in him-

self, besides the great degree of kindness which he naturally derives from his birth in a country which has produced a greater number of negro-drivers than all the other countries in the world put together. This excessive kindness induced him to impute the Norfolk petition to the errors of the petitioners, which errors he was good enough to say, that he viewed with *kindness* and *forbearance*; and he was further good enough to say, that he *pitied* the poor misled persons. This is great comfort to you, at any rate; for, he will doubtless now extend his pity to you; and if you have *this*, what need you care about having your bed sold from under you? However, let us see how the case stands with Mr. BROUGHAM himself. His words had no sense in them, if he did not mean to say, that he *disapproved of the reduction of the interest of the debt*. This was the meaning of his words, or he was guilty of the most scandalous double dealing; and, therefore, this was the meaning of his words.

Now, in the very same speech, he recommends a *general reduction of the public burthens*; he recommends the *severest economy of expenditure*; and, in this same speech, too, he recommends, the *equipping and sending forth of a fleet*! The man who could say this; who could say all this, in one and the same speech, is, if he meant what he said, really an object of *pity*. His *errors* are errors indeed! His notions about national faith; about public burthens, and about fleets, are such as one would expect to hear from no man, in the habit of being suffered to walk about except

under the care of some kind companion.

Sir Francis Burdett, who followed him closely, was more consistent. If the report of his speech be correct, he was for putting aside, *agricultural and all other distress*, and for attending to that which was of vital importance to MAN. He then spoke some Latin, which you would understand quite as well as you can understand this English; for, it will appear to you, I dare say, that English farmers are *men*, as well as Spaniards; and I dare say it will further appear to you, that, let Ferdinand do what he will to the Spaniards, and let the Bourbons do what they will to the Spaniards, they cannot do worse to the landlords of Spain than take away their estates; they cannot do worse to the farmers than take away their capital and send them to the workhouse, or to beg; and they cannot do worse to the labourers than to compel them to live, if they live at all, upon half a belly full of dry bread. Sir Francis was at a loss "which most to admire; the "wisdom, the reason, the virtue or "the patriotism, evinced in the "speech of Mr. BROUGHAM;" and I am at a loss which most to admire; the Hon. Baronet's wishing to cast aside agricultural and all other distress, or that surprising penetration which enabled him to discover, in this speech, four great properties, not one particle of either of which can, I am satisfied, be discovered by any other human being.

Are *you*, Gentlemen, willing to put aside the consideration of agricultural and all other distress? Are you willing to declare your-

selves, and your interests, unworthy of attention, when compared with the Spaniards and their interests! If you be, then, indeed, you will call for war, and for continuing to pay the tax-eaters three for one, together with an addition of the tax-eaters wherewith to carry on the war. But, if you deem yourselves a part of *mankind*, and your interests of a little more importance to you than those of the Spaniards are, you will deprecate all idea of war; you will say, let "MAN"; let Sir FRANCIS BURDETT's great MAN take care of himself; and let us be saved from the poorhouse.

The wisdom of Mr. BROUGHAM's speech was the last thing that one would have expected to hear eulogised. Of the noisy and villanous stock-jobbers and newspapers that speech would naturally receive the praise. But what has that speech done for Mr. BROUGHAM? It has closed up his lips upon the great subject which is to come before the Parliament: I mean the reduction of taxation. Can he, who calls upon the Ministers to equip and send forth a fleet; can that man call upon the Ministers to reduce taxes? He condemns, too, the proposition for reducing the interest of the debt. He will have all the present enormous expenses going on. All the world must know that a war would add to them. To equip and send forth a fleet is war. How, then, is this same man, if he act an honest part, to do otherwise, than to vote with the Ministers, against all reduction of taxation? I warned this gentleman some months ago, against being *too much in haste*. I warned him against the danger

of seeking to obtain popularity by storm. That which he has obtained, upon this occasion, is a sort of popularity which does not wear well, and, in this particular case, it has been blown into air, in less than the fourth part of a moon.

Mr. BROUGHAM pities (kind gentleman) the poor deluded Yeomen of Norfolk; and, as I said before, he will, doubtless, have the generosity to extend his compassionate feelings towards you. But let us see whether there be not a little more sober sense in your petition than in his speech. When the Norfolk petition was passed, it was not *certain* that France was about to invade Spain. That event, therefore, was not alluded to in the Norfolk petition. Now let us see what you pray for. For a reduction of the taxes; for a reduction in all necessary expenses; for an abolition of all unnecessary expenses; for an application of the worth of church and crown lands towards the reduction of the principal of the debt; for an equitable adjustment with regard to the public debt, and with regard to all contracts between man and man; and these, you say, you deem absolutely necessary to the *defence of the country against foreign foes*, and to the restoration of internal tranquillity. Here all is *reasonable*; all is natural; all is practicable; all harmonizes with truth and justice, and here is not the monstrous idea of calling upon the Ministers to equip and send forth a fleet, while, at the same moment, you take from them the means of paying that fleet.

Your opinion, that the reduc-

tions proposed are necessary to the defence of the country against foreign foes, while it is perfectly consistent with the prayers of your petition, is also undeniably true. It is the certainty which the French government has of our inability to go to war, that has emboldened it to invade Spain. They know that we cannot go to war, as long as we remain in our present state, with regard to the debt; and when they hear the outcry which the infamous press has set up against the reduction of that debt; when they hear that mischievous and atrocious press bearing down all before it, and see the cowardly landlords shulking into barns and holes and corners to calumniate the sensible and spirited Yeomanry, who call for a lightening of the weight of this mill-stone; when they hear and see this, when they see the nation chained down to this immoveable mass, is it any wonder that they are bold; is it any wonder that they laugh at our offers of mediation; is it any wonder that they treat our remonstrances with scorn?

We ought, not only to go to war now; but we ought to have gone to war long ago; that is to say, the moment the French stationed an army at the foot of the Pyrennees. If the French succeed in their enterprise, they will, not only place the Spaniards at the mercy of Ferdinand; but they will keep, for years, military occupation of the kingdom of Spain; and that whole kingdom will be as much at the disposal of the king of France as Normandy now is; and a greater blow to the power of England; more danger to Ireland; more danger to our mari-

time power could not have been imagined by mortal man. The march of the French across the Pyrennees ought to have been prevented by us, with an anxiety short, only of that with which we would have prevented the landing of the French in Kent or Sussex. France once in possession of Spain, all sorts of intrigues will be instantly going on, between them and the Americans, for annoying us in the West Indies; for annoying us in the Mediterranean; for undermining our power and influence in all parts of the world, and for reducing us to the most crippled and degraded state. The Americans, full of skill, full of valour, and equally full of commercial greediness and national rivalry and revenge, will go almost any lengths to effect our humiliation. That *right of search*, which has been our great protection in former wars, they would now resolutely dispute; and, with the Americans to carry on their commerce in security, the French, with their immense internal resources, would reduce this nation to a state that would soon make such large draughts upon the compassion of Mr. BROUGHAM, that he would, notwithstanding his excessive stock of kindness and tenderness of heart, not have a particle of pity to spare, even for the deluded approvers of the Norfolk petition.

How, then, Gentlemen, are we to find "*patriotism*;" how are we to find that property, though Sir FRANCIS BURDETT found it in such abundance, in a speech which protested against taking one single ounce from that mill-stone; that mill-stone of incalculable weight, which, to the perfect

knowledge, and the boundless joy, of all the foes of England, is holding her bowed down to the earth. There lies the lion, pulling till he is nearly choked, gasping for breath, his tongue lolling out, his eyes ready to start from his head; he sees the foes at work; he sees them gathering together for his destruction; *we* would fain break in sunder the accursed chain which binds him down; our foreign foes behold the efforts we are making; but they also behold: a noisy, a corrupt, an infamous press, owned by a band of jews and jobbers; and they also behold, stupid or base landlords, and clap-trap lawyers, and all combined to prevent the success of those efforts.

Gentlemen, let us look at the reverse of this disgraceful, this humiliating picture; this picture that makes one blush at pronouncing the name of England. If your prayers were listened to, and acted on: if that reform, those retrenchments, that reduction and that rectifying of contracts; if these things, for which you so earnestly pray, were to take place, is it to be imagined that our foes would not soon change the insolence of their tone? They, indeed, hear our Prime Minister say, that *he would have them to know*, that *we are able to go to war!* Alas! They are too well acquainted with the truth to be influenced in their conduct by any such declaration; and, especially, when they hear him, in the same breath, assert, that which is tantamount to a reprobation of all contracts for reducing the interest of the debt. While this debt is maintained, to its present amount, and in gold payments, they know that

it is as impossible for us to go to war, as it is for us to remove this island to some distant part of the sea. On this mill-stone, therefore, they take their stand. This mill-stone is to them, what the Scripture calls, the munitions of rocks. From the very moment that we heard of the Spanish project, agitated at Verona, I said, that all our remonstrances would be disregarded; that all our threats would be treated with scorn; that all our uneasinesses would be treated with contemptuous pity. It is this debt, which is the rampart of security to our foes; this rampart Mr. BROUGHAM assures those foes, shall not be removed or impaired; and this is an instance of "*patriotism*," which Sir FRANCIS BURDETT thinks is to be rivalled only by that "*wisdom*" which was its clap-trap companion.

It is an old, a trite, but a very sound maxim, that, if you would *live in peace*, you must be *known to be prepared for war*. How many of us, Gentlemen, who happen to be tall and stout, have passed through the world, with a pretty deal of sauciness, and yet, without a beating? I was once going from Vauxhall to Battersea bridge, in a gig. A coal-carter was meeting me; the ruts were deep, the road narrow, a ditch on one side, full of mud; and I could perceive, by all his preliminary movements, that he meant, merely in the way of innocent sport, to give me a gentle jog into the ditch. I *called out* in vain. I remonstrated; but he kept steadily on. I threatened; but he heeded me not. I flung down the apron of the gig. *Il me toisoit*, as the French call it: that is to say, he

measured me with his eye; and seeing the size he was about to have to deal with, he put his whip before the head of the shaft horse, and cried YA! I looked at him smiling, and said, " 't wont do, will it?" He gave me a curse, and a look full of bitterness, but I could not help reflecting, how much better those were, of a very cold morning, than a flounce in the mud. Thus it is, take the world through. Nations *toisent* one another as well as individuals. The French and Americans have *toised* us with very scrupulous exactness; and they have come to the correct conclusion, that, while we are loaded with this debt, we can equip and send forth no fleets. All the bullocking newspaper paragraphs, and all the clap-trap speeches in the world to the contrary notwithstanding.

If, indeed, they were to see the Norfolk petition and your petition, received with applause, and acted upon, with energy, and without loss of time: nay, if they were to see any chance of this, they would begin to doubt of the wisdom of their own measures, and to tremble for the consequences of those measures. They know well how great the power, and how great the spirit and the valour of this nation, if relieved from that which destroys all power, and renders all spirit and all valour unavailing, it is this load about our necks that has created those projects of the despots, and that has emboldened them to proceed in that insolent manner, which Mr. BROUGHAM has so justly, but so vainly described, accompanied, as the description was, with a declaration, that vengeance, and that even the obtaining of justice

was wholly out of our power; a declaration, not in these words, to be sure; but a declaration that amounted to the same thing, because it told our foes, that we were not to use the means, and the only means of enabling us to obtain that vengeance or that justice. Had we not been bound down by this debt, never would there have been a French soldier at the foot of the Pyrennees. Were we relieved from it now, not a French soldier would even yet enter Spain. The country has already suffered enormously from this system of debt and paper-money; but great as the sufferings have been, they are nothing to those which are yet to come, unless the prayer of your petition be listened to, and acted on. An American statesman, having been asked what England would say to the cession of the Floridas, answered, "While England has that *Debt* and that *Parliament*, we have nothing to fear from her." Thus said the Yankee; thus say the Bourbons; and thus may say, the most pitiful, piratical state in the world.

You, Gentlemen, have done your duty. The county of Norfolk has done its duty. Other counties, also, though they have confined their prayers to Reform of Parliament, have acted well their part. The county of Middlesex has nobly done its duty, in elaborately condemning that diabolical system of funding and of paper-money, which has finally brought us into this state of indescrivable distress. And, here, in conclusion, Gentlemen, let me state, in distinct terms, that my hostility goes *against the whole of the system*. I abhor national

debts and paper-money, in whatever degree they may exist; and, if the French should finally overrun and subdue Spain, though I shall detest *their motives*, I shall have the consolation to reflect, that they have, at any rate, destroyed a system of funding. Talk to me of military despotism! Talk to me of the cruelties of tyranny; what cruelties did despot ever *invent*; what cruelties did tyranny ever inflict equal to the natural and inevitable cruelties of this diabolical system. It has been observed by the Morning Chronicle, that we ought to recollect, that *liberty* may be assisted by loans; and it says, that the *independence of America was effected by such means*. Never was a greater error; and if intentional, never a greater falsehood. The debt of that country did not begin till *after independence was secured*; and then it arose out of one of the *vilest frauds* that ever was committed by man. Large sums were due to those who had served in the war. *Certificates* were given to those persons, of the sums due. The cunning jobbers suffered the certificates to depreciate to next to nothing in value. They bought them up for a trifle. And then, and not till then, a law was passed *to fund them*! Thus was the American debt founded in fraud; and never did I yet meet with an American who really loved his country, who did not curse the hour that the system of funding was begun. It introduced there, as it has done here, and as it must every where, habits of extravagance, habits of trick and fraud, habits of gambling for a fortune, instead of working for a fortune; and it will finally,

and inevitably, produce in that country, a sanguinary revolution, a separation of the States, a loss of liberty, or which is much more probable, their mutual hostility, and their dependance upon foreign nations. In the meanwhile, their debt is trifling when compared with ours, and they are, from various circumstances, a formidable and dangerous foe, made such by their knowledge of our weakness, and which weakness they know, must exist, as long as this debt remains.

Once more, Gentlemen, my hostility goes to the whole system: not to this part of it, nor to that part of it, but to the whole system of funding, and of paper-money. I would pay the fundholders to the full of what they *ought to receive*; but I would have no compromise with the system. If I had the power, I would keep regularly on till the whole race of jews and jobbers was completely destroyed. I cannot look at the labourers of England: I cannot see those poor creatures of skin and bone who perform all the labours: I cannot see them in rags, and know that their bodies are laid upon miserable beds of straw; I cannot hear every labourer denominated a pauper: I cannot see this, and see, at the same time, the vile jews rolling about in their carriages and living in luxuries of all sorts: I cannot see this without adverting to and without endeavouring to root up to the very fibres, the accursed cause. You, Gentlemen, have given it a *good tug*; and be you assured that at no distant day, you will have to congratulate yourselves on your sensible and spirited conduct. You were not taken by surprise,

at any rate. No mob was hired in Surrey to make a noise, and to render the decision questionable. No *jockeying*, no hubbub, nothing of this sort occurred to excite a doubt as to your meaning. You heard every one; you listened to every one; and came at last, to an impartial, an unbiassed and solemn decision. That decision will be long remembered with great honour to the county; with great satisfaction to yourselves and to your children; and with inexpressible pleasure to the last moment of his life by,

Gentlemen,

Your sincere Friend, and

Most obedient Servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Postscript. I have just read of another *hole-and-corner* meeting in Norfolk, at which Mr. COKE had the pitiable weakness to attend. And to which he had the more pitiable weakness to give his countenance, in condemnation of the petition of the county. He was not aware that he would have to condemn you also; and to condemn Mr. HUME besides, who has now actually given notice in the House of Commons, of an intention to bring forward measures for the sale of the crown lands, and for the appropriation of the produce, together with that of a vast portion of the church property, to the liquidation of the debt!—But, what I meant to notice here with regard to Mr. COKE's conduct at the *hole-and-corner* meeting, was this: that he thought that the interest of the debt "*must be reduced at last.*" And he "*would advise the fundholders to come to some settlement or compromise, before it was absolutely*

"*necessary, and the sooner, the better!*" Hey-day! What wind blows now! This is almost blowing hot and cold with the same mouth. What is a *compromise*? What is a *settlement*, but an "*equitable adjustment?*" And what did we pray for more than this; and how is this to be done, except *by law*? What sense is there, then, in holding these *hole-and-corner* meetings! What end can they answer, except that of showing the weakness of the parties, and giving them an opportunity of indulging their pitiful envy and malignity?

MEETING OF THE COUNTY OF SURREY.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

A MEETING of the Freeholders of the County of Surrey took place yesterday at Epsom, pursuant to a requisition, signed by several of the nobility, gentry, and freeholders of the county, and presented to the High Sheriff (Palmer, Esq.) praying him to convene the freeholders of the county, for the purpose of taking into consideration the great and increasing distresses of the country, and the necessity of petitioning the House of Commons, for relief from the great and insupportable burden of taxation, by which the nation was oppressed; and also for a speedy and effectual Reform of the Commons House of Parliament.

Though the day was throughout very rainy, yet the freeholders and inhabitants began to assemble in the square in front of the Spread Eagle, soon after eleven o'clock. Large wagons were drawn up in the form of a semicircle for the accommodation of those gentlemen

who were expected to take an active part in the proceedings of the day.

At 12 o'clock the principal gentlemen of the county took their station in the wagons.

Among the noblemen and gentlemen present, we observed Lord King, Lord Ellenborough, Mr. Denison, M.P., Mr. H. Grey Bennet, M.P., Mr. H. Sumner, M.P., M. Maberly, M.P., Captain Maberly, M.P., Mr. C. Calvert, M.P., Mr. Leech, &c. Mr. Cobbett was also present.

The High Sheriff, in coming forward to open the Meeting, said he had invited the freeholders to assemble on that occasion in consequence of an application made to him by a most numerous and respectable body of the noblemen, gentlemen, and freeholders of the county. On receiving that application he felt it his duty not to lose a moment in complying with the request it contained. He should feel it further his duty to do every thing in his power to certify by his authority any resolutions to which the meeting might come; but having come to preside at the meeting and not to deliberate or vote upon their proceedings, he hoped they would excuse him if he declined putting himself in any situation which would render him either positively or constructively a petitioner. Having brought his mind to this conclusion, he felt himself bound in fairness and candour to state it publicly to the meeting. Whether he was right or wrong he would not pretend to determine; but he assured the meeting, that he had no political motive in making such a decision—it was the result of the honest exercise of his judgment. He had done only that which the meeting had an undoubted right to do, he had exercised a free opinion, the right to which he conceived to be a vital principle of the constitution [hear, hear!]. It was usual on such oc-

casions to request the meeting to preserve order; this he would not do; he felt persuaded that every man present would conduct himself in a manner becoming a freeholder of the county of Surrey.

The requisition was here read. It contained the 300 signatures, among which were those of several noblemen and other leading gentlemen of the county.

Lord King said, that if in the distressed state to which the country was reduced, any thing could give him satisfaction, he could feel it at perceiving the number and respectability of the signatures attached to the requisition; because it was the best omen of the ultimate success of that cause, the advocacy of which they had undertaken. In the last petition which they presented to the House of Commons, they stated that they would never cease to use all lawful means of calling for a Parliamentary Reform; he considered that the appearance of the meeting then before him proved that they were acting up to their declaration [applause.] In their last petition they stated that the farmer was unable to continue employing the labourers necessary to the cultivation of his land;—that the labourers had become paupers;—that taxation had swept away the whole produce of the soil [cries of “It is too true.”] He asked them whether from the last year’s experience they felt convinced that that statement was well founded? [“It is”] If so, then the argument was still stronger than it was last year. They had been told that taxation was not the cause of the distresses which they all felt; what else was the cause of that distress? They had now the same soil that they possessed before the war, they had the same prices, and yet they had four times the taxation [hear, hear!] The taxes, including the expenses of collection, now amounted to 60,000,000%. There was not a

single word more than this necessary to convince them that taxation was the cause of the distress ; so much so, indeed, that the landholders would have a very excellent bargain if Government would give them the taxes raised from the soil, and take its produce to themselves [hear! and a laugh.] He knew not what was to be the doctrine of the treasury this year, but if they adhered to the doctrines of last year, he could only say that a scheme more beneficial to the knaves who profited, or the fools who suffered, never had been attempted [hear, hear!] It was difficult in what manner to account for the insensibility shown by Government to the distresses of the agricultural community. Nothing could excuse it but an entire ignorance of the actual state of the country. Indeed there was more truth in this last supposition than was generally imagined; for if they looked to the lives and habits of the present Ministers, they must perceive that no one of them could know any thing of the actual state of the country unless what he picked up from some of the clerks in his office [laughter.] They required to be taught, to use the words of an eloquent writer, that "in every country the first creditor was the plough, that this was an original and indefeasible claim which superseded every other demand." This was the language of the celebrated Mr. Burke, in speaking of India, at a time when our Government had made themselves masters of almost the whole of the produce of its soil. They were told not only that taxation was not the cause of distress, but that the reduction of taxation about to be made would afford no relief [a person in the crowd—"Mr. Peel said so."] He really believed that this was true, for he looked not to the quality, but to the quantity of taxation about to be taken off. Suppose he were ill, and that a

physician were to come to him with a grave face and say, "I shall give you some bark, but I know it will do you no good." This would depend upon the nature of the case. If a pound of bark were the proper remedy, but that instead of giving that quantity the physician gave only an ounce, it would of course afford no relief. So he feared it would be with Ministers; they would give the ounce instead of the pound, and then say, "take it, but it will be of no use to you." But, he contended, Ministers had not last year treated the country with common honesty. They made no reduction, they thought of no reduction, until they were actually compelled to it by the public voice; even then before any thing was done, they felt their way, they calculated what would satisfy their supporters; that *minimum* they gave, and that *minimum* they would now give, when they found themselves compelled to it. Could any reduction be made this year, when we had at least some prospect of a war before us? If so, then he asked why was not that reduction made last year? why was it not made during the last six years? It was dishonest dealing with the country to refuse doing so, and proved that Ministers never would surrender one penny, unless compelled to do so by the voice of the country. They must all have remarked a circumstance which took place in the House of Commons last year. Ministers had resisted the repeated calls of the country for reduction: they had resisted the persevering exertions of Mr. Hume: they found it was an assault upon that patronage, which, by a silent compact among themselves, they had determined to preserve;—the compact was a silent one, but by some strange blunder, some unaccountable imprudence, the thing slipped out:—a Minister of the Crown openly declared, that it was necessary to make a stand in defence of

that patronage, as it was necessary to carry on the Government [hear, hear!] The House of Commons was certainly the assembly in which such a deal could have been made, but it was received with satisfaction and would now point out the wisdom of the arrangement. The appointments were also prizes to members of parliament for themselves or their dependants [shame, shame!]. Let them look to the colonies—there were islands, and peninsulas and promontories, and whole coasts to be governed, and officered, and commanded in various ways, civil and military, affording a rich harvest to the prize speculators of the House of Commons and their friends and dependants. They had heard of the fortunate islands, and they had heard too that Don Quixotte bestowed the government of the Island of Barataria, upon his faithful 'Squire Sancho. That, however, was an ideal appointment, but however ideal our appointments might be, it was found that there were real salaries attached to them [hear, hear, and a laugh!]. Those were the abuses which they ought to pull down and abate, but which could be only abated by an effectual reform in parliament. These abuses were the main cause of the present distresses—they arose out of our funding system during a long war, and with a depreciated currency. Our

system was certainly bad in other countries, it was paid the expenses of their depreciating their currency; it was not to be found in the history of the world, that any head of a nation had done so. He was not a man to do as they would wish to be done by. He felt, too, that under all the existing circumstances of the country, it would be neither wise nor politic to give ministers too much encouragement, by recommending a reduction of the national debt. He feared if they did so, ministers would be glad to take them at their word: they already knew how anxious ministers were to stretch forth their long arms, in order to fill their coffers, and therefore he feared they would be anxious to avail themselves of any pretext to relieve themselves from their engagements;—indeed, he very much feared that if the Kentish petition had been put to a vote by ballot in the House of Commons, it would have gone hard with the public creditor [hear! and a laugh.]—Nor did the character which ministers were in the habit of vaunting, tend to dispel this fear. He remembered having heard of a man who, in speaking of himself, said, “I feel my honour and character stand so high, that I could never be guilty of a mean or dirty action, —unless it were damnably to my

single word more than this necessary to convince them that taxation was the cause of the distress ; so much so, indeed, that the landholders would have a very excellent bargain if Government would give them the taxes raised from the soil, and take its produce to themselves [hear! and a laugh.] He knew not what was to be the doctrine of the treasury this year, but if they adhered to the doctrines of last year, he could only say that a scheme more beneficial to the knaves who profited, or the fools who suffered, never had been attempted [hear, hear!] It was difficult in what manner to account for the insensibility shown by Government to the distresses of the agricultural community. Nothing could excuse it but an entire ignorance of the actual state of the country. Indeed there was more truth in this last supposition than was generally imagined; for if they looked to the lives and habits of the present Ministers, they must perceive that no one of them could know any thing of the actual state of the country unless what he picked up from some of the clerks in his office [laughter.] They required to be taught, to use the words of an eloquent writer, that "in every country the first creditor was the plough, that this was an original and indefeasible claim which superseded every other demand." This was the language of the celebrated Mr. Burke, in speaking of India, at a time when our Government had made themselves masters of almost the whole of the produce of its soil. They were told not only that taxation was not the cause of distress, but that the reduction of taxation about to be made would afford no relief [a person in the crowd—"Mr. Peel said so."] He really believed that this was true, for he looked not to the quality, but to the quantity of taxation about to be taken off. Suppose he were ill, and that a

physician were to come to him with a grave face and say, "I shall give you some bark, but I know it will do you no good." This would depend upon the nature of the case. If a pound of bark were the proper remedy, but that instead of giving that quantity the physician gave only an ounce, it would of course afford no relief. So he feared it would be with Ministers; they would give the ounce instead of the pound, and then say, "take it, but it will be of no use to you." But, he contended, Ministers had not last year treated the country with common honesty. They made no reduction, they thought of no reduction, until they were actually compelled to it by the public voice; even then before any thing was done, they felt their way, they calculated what would satisfy their supporters; that *minimum* they gave, and that *minimum* they would now give, when they found themselves compelled to it. Could any reduction be made this year, when we had at least some prospect of a war before us? If so, then he asked why was not that reduction made last year? why was it not made during the last six years? It was dishonest dealing with the country to refuse doing so, and proved that Ministers never would surrender one penny, unless compelled to do so by the voice of the country. They must all have remarked a circumstance which took place in the House of Commons last year. Ministers had resisted the repeated calls of the country for reduction: they had resisted the persevering exertions of Mr. Hume: they found it was an assault upon that patronage, which, by a silent compact among themselves, they had determined to preserve;—the compact was a silent one, but by some strange blunder, some unaccountable imprudence, the thing slipped out:—a Minister of the Crown openly declared, that it was necessary to make a stand in defence of

that patronage, as it was necessary to carry on the Government [hear, hear!] The House of Commons was certainly the only assembly in which such a declaration could have been made, but there it was received with satisfaction. He would now point out the influence which this patronage gave to Ministers. Let them look to the army, they would there find a large portion of effective men, a portion certainly larger than necessary at a period like the present, but they would find that there were general officers, staff officers, and other appointments much beyond the regular proportion of such an army in this or any other country, and why? Because those things were looked upon as prizes to members of parliament. The collection of the revenue, the civil list, foreign appointments—those several departments were also prizes to members of parliament for themselves or their dependants [shame, shame!]. Let them look to the colonies—there were islands, and peninsulas and promontories, and whole coasts to be governed, and officered, and commanded in various ways, civil and military, affording a rich harvest to the prize speculators of the House of Commons and their friends and dependants. They had heard of the fortunate islands, and they had heard too that Don Quixotte bestowed the government of the Island of Barataria, upon his faithful Squire Sancho. That, however, was an ideal appointment, but however ideal our appointments might be, it was found that there were real salaries attached to them [hear, hear, and a laugh!]. Those were the abuses which they ought to pull down and abate, but which could be only abated by an effectual reform in parliament. These abuses were the main cause of the present distresses—they arose out of our funding system during a long war, and with a depreciated currency. Our

funding system was certainly bad enough—other countries, it was true, had paid the expenses of their wars by depreciating their currency, but it was not to be found in the history of the world, that any country besides ourselves had brought into action those two destructive operations, a funding system and a depreciated currency. By this means we found it easy to enter into and support a war, but we now feel the effects of the facility so afforded to us. He now came to a part of the subject which had much engaged public attention, and upon which he wished to say a few words—he meant the public debt. It was perfectly true that necessity had no law, but even in the extremity of the country's distress, they would wish to do justice to every man—to do as they would wish to be done by. He felt, too, that under all the existing circumstances of the country, it would be neither wise nor politic to give ministers too much encouragement, by recommending a reduction of the national debt. He feared if they did so, ministers would be glad to take them at their word: they already knew how anxious ministers were to stretch forth their long arms, in order to fill their coffers, and therefore he feared they would be anxious to avail themselves of any pretext to relieve themselves from their engagements;—indeed, he very much feared that if the Kentish petition had been put to a vote by ballot in the House of Commons, it would have gone hard with the public creditor [hear! and a laugh.]—Nor did the character which ministers were in the habit of vaunting, tend to dispel this fear. He remembered having heard of a man who, in speaking of himself, said, "I feel my honour and character stand so high, that I could never be guilty of a mean or dirty action, —unless it were damnably to my

advantage" [laughing.]—He feared, too, that if the proposed reduction were to take place, ministers would apply the money to any thing but to the public benefit [hear, hear!].—Before they touched the property of the public creditor, they were bound to reduce all offices, to abolish all useless places, in a word, to inquire into and economise in every department of the public service, without sparing a penny to any man upon any pretence. The Irish church establishment, for instance, was enormous, it was beyond all idea, and certainly not necessary to be supported, at its present rate, for any good purpose. In speaking thus, he wished to draw a distinction between the exemplary working clergy and the rectors, the golden prebends and the wealthy bishops with livings in *commendam*. There was no church on the continent the establishment of which had not been reduced. The English church was the only church in Europe which had escaped.—He always considered the church as a part of the establishment of the country, and as such the government had a right to pay its functionaries in land or in pensions as it pleased. So strongly was this felt, that Mr. Pitt intended to bring in a bill affecting church property, but he was frightened out of it. When all the resources of the country were necessary to its safety, the church ought certainly to contribute its share [hear, hear, hear!]. He would now state two or three facts, extracted from a book lately published, called (as we understood) "A description of the House of Commons." He found that in the last session, out of 40 counties, 25 members voted for ministers, and 37 against them, in 89 cities and places where elections were open, 57 voted for ministers, and 107 against them; in 99 cities and places where the election was resolved into individuals, 151

voted for ministers, and 12 against them. From this it was clear, that in all places where elections were open, there was to be found a preponderance, of members who sympathised with, and voted in support of the interests of the people. A motion was made last year for a reduction of the Salt Tax; ministers at first resisted, and the question was negatived. They afterwards gave it up of themselves. Upon the motion for the reduction of the tax, the majority against the reduction was 169 of these, there were 14 county members and 61 placemen. In the minority of 165 there was 42 county members, so that the 14 county members for ministers preponderated against the 42 county members who opposed them. In the same pamphlet, it appeared that 89 members of the House of Commons received 180,000*l.* a year of the public money between them. After this statement it must be confessed that economy was not among the public virtues of the present ministry. The people sent members to Parliament to watch over their interests, but the members once in, thought it better to look round and attend to their own. The only remedy for these complicated evils was a Reform of the House of Commons. The Noble Lord, after thanking the meeting for the attention with which he had been heard, proposed that the following petition (which he read) should be adopted by the meeting:—

" TO THE HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

" The humble Petition of the suffering Freeholders, Landowners, and Occupiers of Land in the County of Surrey,

" SHEWETH—That your Petitioners, after enduring all the aggravated distresses which from day to day have pressed upon them with increasing weight since

they last exposed the state of their affairs before your Honourable House, in the month of February last, now again, with all humility, approach your Honourable House, and pray for that relief which your Honourable House is alone able to afford.

"Your Petitioners most humbly venture to remind your Honourable House, that experience has unfortunately confirmed all the opinions contained in their former Petition; that the Farmers are at this time still less able to afford the labour necessary to due cultivation; that the labourers in far greater numbers are compelled to become paupers; and that the further fall in the price of produce, which your Petitioners anticipated, has actually taken place; and that the whole, or nearly the whole, of the gross produce is absorbed in taxes, tithes, wages, rates, and expenses attending the cultivation of the land.

"That the relief which your Honourable House was pleased to afford last year, is most inadequate to the pressing necessities of your humble Petitioners, who are again compelled, most humbly, to implore your Honourable House to make a further and much greater reduction of the burden of taxation, and particularly to repeal the House and Window Tax, and the duties on Malt and on other articles of the first necessity.

"Your Petitioners entertain the most decided opinion that their present distress would never have been known, if the representation of the people had been consonant to the long settled laws, and constitution of their country; they understand that a majority of the Members of your Honourable House is returned by a small number of individuals, who have appropriated to themselves and to their own private benefit, those rights which belong to the people at large. This unwarrantable con-

version of a great public trust into a private property, has produced an endless train of abuses in every department of the Government, both at home and abroad, every where apparent in the vicious system of boundless profusion, maintained for the sake of the increase of patronage; for this object, the public service and the public servants are paid at the dearest, and not at the cheapest rate, for which those services could be performed and fairly remunerated, and the interest of those individuals who have usurped the property of returning Members to sit in your Honourable House, or of those who exercise the trade of procuring the return of Members, is preferred above every other consideration.

"In the Army, a host of Generals and Field Officers, utterly disproportioned to the effective establishment, and unknown in any other country, and a numerous expensive Staff, are paid out of the produce of the taxes levied upon your humble and suffering Petitioners, for the benefit of the Members of your Honourable House, and of the other House of Parliament, or of their near connexions.

"In the Colonies, a legion of Governors and Officers, enjoying splendid appointments, and a general studied system of extravagance is maintained, and defrayed in great part from the produce of the taxes levied upon your humble and suffering Petitioners, for the sake of patronage, and for the benefit of the Members of your Honourable House, and of the other House of Parliament, and of their near connexions.

"In the Civil List, under the class of Foreign Ministers, a most extravagant and unnecessary expense in the ordinary and extraordinary charges, in the appointments of Ambassadors and Ministers, with very largely increased ex-

laries and outfits, is incurred and defrayed from the produce of the Taxes levied upon your humble and suffering Petitioners, for the sake of the increase of the patronage, for the benefit of the Members of your Honourable House, and of the other House of Parliament, and of their near connexions.

"In the Revenue, a large addition is made to the public burdens pressing so severely upon your humble and suffering Petitioners, in consequence of the expensive mode of collection and management employed in that department, which alone absorbs the sum of four millions; a misapplication of the national resources retained for the sake of patronage for the benefit of the near connexions and supporters of the Members of your Honourable House.

"Your Petitioners humbly represent to your Honourable House, that the pressing difficulties of the country urgently require that all these numerous abuses in the administration of public affairs, so injurious to your humble Petitioners, but so advantageous to the Members of your Honourable House, be speedily and thoroughly reformed, and the expenses of the state reduced to the scale of former and happier times.

"In a Parliament fully and fairly representing the people, your humble Petitioners place their only hopes of salvation from impending ruin; they believe that an Assembly composed of the real Representatives of the nation will alone be able to carry into effect a general system of severe economy, and an unsparing retrenchment of the Civil and Military Establishments, and of all Offices, Places, Sinecures, and Pensions, not merited by public services.

"Your Petitioners are confident that a reformed House of Commons will have the virtue and ability to apply the whole of the national resources to the relief of

the public necessities, and rather than consummate the ruin of the landed interest, to derive resources from the Sale of the Crown Lands, and from the excesses of that large mass of public property at present employed in supporting the enormous Church Establishment in England and Ireland, which may be reduced to a more moderate scale, without detriment to true religion or morality.

"Your humble Petitioners suffering under the intolerable weight of Taxation imposed upon them by the acts of an unreformed Parliament, trust that a reformed House of Commons will be able to apply the best remedy for the past, and at the same time to afford the only security for the future; they therefore most humbly pray your Honourable House to establish an effectual Reform.

(Mr. COBBETT'S

Addition to the Petition.)

"Without which your Petitioners can see no hope of that equitable adjustment with regard to the Public Debt, and with regard to all contracts between man and man, which is absolutely necessary to the defence of the country against foreign foes, and to the restoration of internal tranquillity. And your Petitioners will ever pray."

The Petition was received with repeated cheers.

Mr. Leech seconded the motion. After the able and eloquent speech of the Noble Lord, it would appear unnecessary to add a single word upon the question of Reform. But when he looked to the distresses by which they were surrounded—when he considered that they had been petitioning year after year without any attention being shown to their wants or wishes, he, as a practical farmer, was anxious to point out how things were at present, and how they were likely to be, unless some speedy and permanent relief was applied. He

had been for some time farming 500 acres of land, and for the benefit of landlords and tenants, and particularly those landlords who were not practical farmers, he wished to state the result of last year's experience. By the most accurate account he found, that at the end of the year, without reckoning one farthing of rent, the expenses were as nearly as possible equal to the produce of the farm. If this was so in his case, it was, he was pretty sure, the case generally with all the farmers in the kingdom. This being so, the landlords who received rents received them out of the capitals of the tenants [hear, hear!] It was said in the House of Commons that the landed interest was recovering, that rents were reduced to the standard of 1792, and it was hoped that every thing would go on well. Were their rents reduced to the standard of 1792 [No, no!]? Then, if not, they must go on paying their rents out of their capitals, and even if the rents were reduced to the standard of 1792, it would afford them no relief, unless they were better farmers than he was. If this were not done, the landlords would begin to find a deficiency, and then they would be induced to join hand in hand with the Reformers in pointing out excessive taxation as the cause of their distresses. He had forgotten to state, that his farm, though unproductive, was free from that odious and objectionable tax, called tithes. He used these terms without meaning any offence to the clergy; he was most anxious to see them amply provided for, but in a fairer and more equitable manner. The Honourable Gentleman, after alluding to the origin of tithes, adverted to Blackstone's description of the British Constitution, in support of his argument as to what the House of Commons ought to be. That learned judge and constitutional lawyer, after de-

scribing the functions of the various branches of the constitution, proceeded as follows:—

“ Thus every branch of our civil polity supports and is supported, regulates and is regulated by the rest; for the two Houses naturally drawing in two directions of opposite interest, and the prerogative in another still different from them both, they *mutually keep each other from exceeding their proper limits*, while the whole is prevented from separation, and artificially connected together by the mixed nature of the crown, which is a part of the legislative, and the sole executive magistrate. Like three distinct powers in mechanics, they jointly impel the machine of Government in a direction different from what either, acting by itself, would have done; but at the same time in a direction partaking of each, and formed out of all; *a direction which constitutes the true line of the liberty and happiness of the community.*”—Vol. i. p. 155.

This showed what the constitution ought to be, but where were the different pullings to be seen in our constitution? Did one House pull one way and the other another, and the Crown a third? No—they all went quietly together in support of the government. In the same writer he found the following description of the House of Commons:—

“ The Commons consist of all such men of property in the kingdom as have not seats in the House of Lords, *every one of which has a voice in Parliament, either personally or by his representatives.*—In a *free state every man, who is supposed a free agent, ought to be in some measure his own governor; and therefore a branch at least of the legislative power should reside in the whole body of the people.* And this power, when the territories of the state are small, and its citizens easily known, *should be exercised by the people in their aggregate or collec-*

tive capacity, as was wisely ordained in the petty Republics of Greece, and the first rudiments of the Roman State."—Pages 158, 159.

Here they saw what the House of Commons ought to be, but he would ask whether it was so at present? Had the body of the people any more control over the House of Commons than the French people had? The whole power and control of Parliament were in the hands of the government. Mr. Blackstone, speaking of the great power of Parliament, says—

"So that it is a matter most essential to the liberties of this kingdom, that such members be *delegated* to this important trust, as are most eminent for their probity, their fortitude, and their knowledge; for it was a known apothegm of the great Lord Treasurer Burleigh, that "England could never be ruined *but by a parliament*;" and as Sir Matthew Hale observes, this being the highest and greatest court, over which none other can have jurisdiction in the kingdom, if by any means a misgovernment should any way fall upon it, the subjects of this kingdom are left without all manner of remedy. To the same purpose the President Montesquieu, though I trust too hastily presages, that as Rome, Sparta and Carthage have lost their liberty, and perished—so the constitution of England will, in time, lose its liberty, will perish—it will perish whenever the *legislative* power shall become more corrupt than the executive."—Page 161.

The Honourable Gentleman, after some further observations, which want of space prevents us from inserting, concluded by giving his cordial support to the petition.

The *High Sheriff* was about to put the question, when

Mr. Cobbett came forward to address the meeting. He was received with loud applause. With the petition prepared by the noble lord, and every part of it perfectly

agreed. But it appeared to him that there was one thing, and that too a material thing, omitted in the petition. He meant a reference to the present funded system. The noble lord, with his usual anxiety, and a very laudable anxiety it was, feared to trust in the hands of ministers any thing which would give them the power of doing mischief. He (Mr. Cobbett) too, knowing them, would be sorry to place any power or any money within their reach. The noble lord, too, wished a reduction of taxes, but that was not possible to any amount, unless they reduced the debt also [hear, hear!]. He did not wish to do injustice to any one; he did not wish to call upon ministers to do that which was unlawful, any such proceeding would only defeat its object. The reduction which he proposed in the national debt, of course imagined a reformed Parliament, in whom some confidence might be placed. Mr. Cobbett, after some further remarks, adverted to the distress caused by the alteration in the currency. The bushel of wheat was the true standard. They borrowed one bushel of wheat and were now obliged to pay three in return. He called upon them to look at the magnitude of the debt; it was impossible to pay the interest of it; and at the same time keep up the establishment necessary for the protection of the country. The interest of the debt, including the expense of collecting, amounted to 47,000,000*l.* And if they could pay that sum, it only required a little pinch more to extract from them what they paid at present. The landholder, the farmer, the labourer, were suffering in a degree never before known. Who ever knew a labourer working for three shillings per week ["they work for two shillings"], and after this were they to be told of a breach of faith with the public creditor? This was the language used at the time of

the French revolution. It had been well said, that the national faith was first due to the landholder and tenant, and not to the creditor of the state. Now, let the meeting consider what had been the effect of the last 30 years of sinking fund? The landholders, who borrowed money at 5 per cent., had been, in addition, paying 14,000,000*l.* for several years, which was, to use the cant phrase, "to be laid out in the market," that was to say, to be so laid out as to increase the value of the creditor's property; it was, in fact, giving him a kind of bonus, for the sinking fund could only be so considered. Mr. Cobbett concluded by moving the following words as an addition to the petition:—"Without which your petitioners can see no hope of that equitable adjustment with regard to the public debt, and with regard to all contracts between man and man, which is absolutely necessary to the defence of the country against foreign foes, and to the restoration of its internal tranquillity."

Lord *Ellenborough* next presented himself to the meeting. He said that he saw nothing in the nature of the petition which had been read which could induce persons holding power, as the petitioners stated, to comply with it [clamour and disapprobation.] Lord *Ellenborough* said he appeared there in discharge of his duty, but if the meeting were not inclined to hear, he assured them he was not at all anxious to address them. His Lordship here retired, but by the advice of Mr. *Grey Bennet* and other gentlemen, he again came forward. He said that the only point on which he wished to address the meeting was with respect to the Amendment of the gentleman who had just sat down. Against that Amendment he entered his solemn protest. It was natural that he (Mr. Cobbett) should wish to deal with the public creditor in the same manner as

he had dealt with his own [hisses, and cries of "That is unfair."]

Mr. *Cobbett*—Let the Noble Lord be heard.

Lord *Ellenborough*—An adjustment, as it was called, with the public creditor, would be nothing but force on the one side, and weakness on the other. Nor could such an act be fairly called national relief; it would be only taking from the public creditor in order to give to the landholder—it would be only giving advantage to one class to the ruin of another. Such were not the notions of justice and honesty in other and better times. England had been hitherto famed for her faith, her honesty and justice, and he could assure them that any deviation from those principles could not serve them—he could assure them that what they learnt in their youth, "honesty is the best policy," was strictly true. He protested against the Amendment of Mr. Cobbett, and he hoped that on the grounds of public faith and common honesty, it would be rejected with indignation.

The Honourable Mr. *G. Bennet* next came forward, and was received with the loudest and warmest expressions of regard. The honourable gentleman said, that as he had seconded the motion of Mr. Cobbett, and as the noble lord next him (Lord King) knew he had suggested, long before the petition had been submitted to the county, to introduce a passage similar to that contained in the amendment—indeed, as he had used the very words "equitable adjustment," he felt it due to his character, and to the character of the freeholders, to explain himself. Had he ventured to support any proposition, opposed to the principles of integrity and of honour, it would follow that he intended to disgrace himself and the county too. He rose to repel any imputation of that kind. The proposition which he supported

went to plunder no man; it was not likely that he, whose life had ever been opposed to plunder and oppression [applause]—it was not likely that he would sanction any measure of a scandalous or infamous nature [continued applause.] When plunder was talked of, it would be right to see what Government, backed by the wisdom of Parliament, had done for the country. Government took from every man one half of what he stood possessed, and superadded one half to the income of the fundholder. No person who had ever given himself the trouble to think on the subject, could say that the country was bound to pay in gold the money which was borrowed in a depreciated currency. The distress of the country was great, but it was natural; for, considering their depreciated means, the people actually paid now in time of peace more than they paid during the war. The property of the country was swept away by a measure which he would call the greatest act of scandalous confiscation that any government in the world had ever been guilty of. Now, with respect to the remedy—the remedy pointed out was not an act of spoliation—it was not an act that would take from the poor or the defenceless—it was not an act to attack saving banks, or to strip from the honest and industrious the means of sustaining them in their old age—but it was an act for an amicable adjustment, an adjustment which would affect the landholders, the tradesmen, the fundholders, and all other descriptions of persons holding property—such an arrangement, in fact, as a private gentleman would wish to make with his creditors [applause.] That arrangement he had supported when it was first mentioned in Parliament, and he would ever support it, because he looked upon it to be fair, and he felt that it

was necessary; because he thought that, without such an arrangement, the country could not go on, without which they could not look foreign tyrants in the face [applause.] What was the state of England even in their own recollection? What was the state of England in 1792? They heard no complaints at that period; the landlord received his rents; the farmer had his fair profits; the husbandman received the fair price of his labour; there was no complaint, because there was no distress; but in 1792 they had 20 millions of taxes to pay—they had now to pay 60 millions! With means nearly equal, they had to pay in the shape of taxes three times more than they paid in 1792.—Was it too much then, to ask Parliament to look the storm in the face? He could assure the noble lord, that he deprecated as much as any man an interference with the rights of others; he made no proposition that was unjust, and certain he was, that if some arrangement was not made now, the imperious necessity of the country would soon demand it. With respect to the great question of reform, he had heard the noble lord (Ellenborough) say, indeed he had seen it under his hand, the noble lord, with the good sense that distinguished him—

Mr. Cobbett — “Bad taste—Insolence.”

Mr. Bennet said, he was not accountable for the taste of any man, but the noble lord has asserted, that a reform ought to be granted when called for by the majority of the people; now he believed, that if the sense of every Englishman were taken (save those who profited by the opposite doctrine), it would be found that the nation at large was in favour of reform [applause.] Whenever the people addressed the Parliament, they spoke a language opposite to that of the government: the people were

on one side and the government on the other. The people appeared to be 50 years in advance of the government—the one was for supporting an old system, by means of old jobs, old management, and corruption; the other looked to the improvement of the world—to the march of time and events; and they called upon the government to adopt that system of reform and retrenchment, which were so necessary for their prosperity at home, and for their strength, their character, and their dignity abroad [loud applause.] He hoped he had rescued his character from the imputation of committing, or wishing to see committed, pillage or plunder of any sort [applause.]—He wished not for spoliation [cries of “No, no, you never did”]; he wished to see take place an adjustment that was necessary for the security of all parties—an adjustment which would give to the country gentleman his rent; to the tenant the fair reward of his labour, and the fair return of his capital; and to the labourer the wages which he earned by the sweat of his brow, and which he ought to receive, to keep, and to enjoy. He wished, in fine, to protect the country against the effects of that war which had shaken the security of all classes of persons, which had endangered all property, and nearly destroyed all confidence. The honourable gentleman retired from the front of the hustings, amid the loud and continued cheers of the meeting.

Mr. Cobbett next addressed himself to the Sheriff. He had to say a word in explanation. The noble lord (Ellenborough), with great good taste alluded to his (Mr. C.’s) private affairs [cries of “Unfair, unfair”!] He had talked of his (Mr. Cobbett’s) debts. The noble lord must have seen a petition which he had presented to the House of Lords, and which petition stated that he had mortgaged

an estate for 13,000*l.*, which cost him 30,000*l.*, and that mortgage was foreclosed—and thus, at one blow, he had lost more than two seven thousand pounds, taken by the noble lord’s sinecure [applause.]

Sir Thos. Turton said, that the violent and dangerous expressions which he had heard that day would fail to give any thing like satisfaction.

Mr. Cobbett—Especially to sinecurists and placemen [a laugh.]

Sir Thos. Turton—Since he entered first into political life, he never received any thing from Government. The allusion could not apply to him. The distress of which the agriculturists complained was too well founded. But what would remove that distress? What would enable the people to pay their rent? [cries of “reform.”] He was no enemy to reform; he would wish to see a reform with a view to numbers and property accomplished. An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Leech) had said, that there could be no government without rogues.

Mr. Leech said, he never so expressed himself. He had said that no honest men could carry on the government under the present system.

A voice in the crowd—Mr. Pitt had said so 25 years ago.

Sir T. Turton—Then, if that be the case, we are in a forlorn situation [cries of “We know it.”] He was no enemy to reform, but reform would not redress their grievances. Did they suppose that if, on retiring to their homes, they were asked how they were to pay their rents, their answer would be satisfactory if they said “we have been attending a meeting on reform that will enable us to pay the rent?” [hooting and laughter.] So it was with the poor, oppressed, and injured people of Ireland;—they were led to think that Catholic Emancipation would redress their

wrongs [a voice in the crowd—"No, not all; but many of their wrongs and insults."] How did it happen that remedies now proposed were never thought of before? The person (Mr. Cobbett) who proposed the amendment, wished to take away the whole of the interest of the debt.

Mr. Cobbett—No, no such thing. I wish only for an equitable adjustment.

Sir Thos. Turton—He felt that the debt was a great load, and the only means of relieving the country from it was, by making one great and patriotic sacrifice on the part of all classes, in order to get rid of that millstone. He would be one of those who would make such a sacrifice—but when persons called for a reduction of salaries and of rents agreeable to the standard of 1792—they ought first to put the persons to be affected by that reduction in the same situation that they were in at that period. The Honourable Baronet proceeded with some other observations but the calls for Mr. Denison were so loud and frequent, that he was prevented for a short time from proceeding. He would have wished that the two questions, that of agricultural distress and reform, had been separated as they were at Somerset [interruption.] With respect to both questions, particularly as to reform, he would give his opinions upon it in spite of the clamour by which he was assailed.

Mr. Leech said, the Honourable Baronet had charged him with saying, that all men in the government must be rogues.

Sir Thos. Turton—No; I did not [cries of "Yes, you did—you did."]

Mr. Leech—The assertion was made, and he in the face of the meeting declared it to be false. What he said was, that under existing circumstances, no honest man could govern the country.

Mr. Thelwall recommended to the meeting to support the petition,

but to reject the addition proposed by Mr. Cobbett.

Mr. Denison next came forward, and was received with a burst of applause, of hearty and affectionate gratulation which we have seldom witnessed at a public meeting. After silence was somewhat restored, the honourable gentleman said, that as one of those who had signed the requisition, and more especially as standing in that proud situation to which by their kindness he was elevated, he felt it his duty to offer a few observations to the meeting. The distresses of the country were too great and too glaring to be denied by any party. The causes of that distress were, in the first place, an excessive taxation, the low price of produce, and the change that had been made in the currency of the country. That change was made by the Acts of 1797 and 1819—the first inundated the country with paper—the second Act called for payment in gold without making that proper adjustment which ought to be made. He (Mr. D.) was one of the men who thought with the noble lord, that it would have been better openly to have raised the standard of value, and to have shown the country the state it was in. The debt had been in a great measure caused by that war which was so glorious to their arms and so fatal to their finances. During the course of that war millions were lavished to support, or rather to reinstate upon their throne, the wise, the liberal, the enlightened, the tolerant Bourbons [laughter and applause]—to support the tottering thrones of the monarchs of Austria, of Prussia, and of Russia—of those monarchs who during the fleeting hour of his prosperity bowed before Napoleon—his inferiors in talent, in energy, in decision—his equals, perhaps his superiors, in contempt for the liberties of mankind, and of the rights of distant nations

[applause.] Another cause of the distresses of the people was the extravagance of Government—the extravagance of the Government of this country was greater than that of any Government in ancient or modern times. Our envoy to America had a salary higher than the salary of the President of the United States [hear!]. The diminished means of the country was another cause of the distress; overproduction was not the cause of distress; the production was not too great for the consumption of the country; but the fact was, that consumers could not buy.—The remedy for the distress was retrenchment, reform, and a strict economy. The Honorable Baronet who had spoken before him asked what good would reform do? In the first place it would prevent the recurrence of those acts which the nation deplored. A reformed Parliament would see the real evils of the country, and would apply a real remedy [applause.]—He (Mr. D.) had seen an able pamphlet lately published, which stated that 200 gentlemen sat in that House, independent of the people. The petition of the friends of the people stated that 307 members were sent into the House by 151 proprietors, and that 80 members in the House received 170,000*l.*, independent of their connections. He had no doubt that those gentlemen who were sent by the proprietors of boroughs to Parliament performed their duty to those who sent them [a laugh]; but what he complained of was, that they did not represent the people [applause.] The representative of the people had a sacred trust confided to him—he was bound to account for his conduct; but if every man in the House of Commons represented the people, the Habeas Corpus, under mere pretences, would not have been so often repealed [applause]—the Six Acts would never have been passed [applause]

—the country would not have seen almost the same majority uniformly supporting every Minister—they would not have seen the same majority sanctioning every oppression and every burthen. With respect to the topics that had been alluded to, he was of opinion that the church property and the funded property ought to be respected. He thought that the clergyman had as good a right to his tithe, and the fundholder to his dividend, as the first nobleman had to his estate. It was his opinion that before they touched one or the other, that every sinecure ought to be abolished [a voice in the crowd — “Ellenborough is the first”]—that every place ought to be reduced to the lowest possible scale [applause.] Such was his opinion; but he had not heard any one that day talk of robbing the public creditor [hear, hear!] or the church [hear, hear!] What he heard was an amicable arrangement—an arrangement, in his opinion, most just and most necessary. No man present could wish to rob the orphan or the widow, the church or the fundholder. What the meeting—what the country wished for, was that equal justice should be done by all parties [applause.] As to the question of reform, it was necessary for a man, elevated to the situation which he held by their kindness, to say what he thought on that subject. He thought that retrenchment was a good thing, but retrenchment without reform should not satisfy the country; and for this plain reason, amongst others — without reform one minister might retrench one day, and another minister might, on the following day, undo all the good acts of his predecessor. He had been ever consistent on the question of reform [applause.] The first vote he gave in Parliament in the year 1797, was in support of Lord Grey's motion on reform [applause,] he had ever since held the same opinions [ap-

plause.] Now that graver years were sailing by he still retained the same sentiments; the last vote he gave on this subject was in favour of Lord John Russell's motion last year [applause.] He was decidedly in favour of a short duration of Parliament; he was for giving representatives to Leeds, Manchester, and other places who had no representatives. He was for giving householders a vote, he was also decidedly of opinion that the number of gentlemen who sat in the House of Commons, and who held places under Government, ought to be diminished. He was in favour of the bill introduced by his hon. friend (Mr. Bennet), whose virtues required no comment, as they were above all praise, whose noble spirit was opposed to tyranny and oppression in every other country, and devoted to the fame, and interest, and freedom of his own. The bill of his honourable friend would leave in the House 30 persons to transact the business of Government. He hoped that his hon. friend would again bring forward that measure [applause.]—[Mr. Bennet: "I certainly shall"—great applause.]—He was not disposed to deny that men of property ought to have great weight in the part of the country where they resided; but was it right that great proprietors, living at a great distance, without any natural connection with the place to be represented, should, to use a parliamentary word, make a borough arrangement [hear, hear!]—should send in their nominees to attend to their interests only, and to forward their objects? It was a noble principle that the representatives of the people were accountable for their conduct; and if the expense of elections was diminished, men of abilities and worth would present themselves, and turn out those who should abuse their trust. The hon. gentleman, after describing Lord John Russell's bill,

said, that he hoped as long as he lived his constituents would find him true and faithful to their interests [applause.] There was nothing the Government could give that he would accept of [applause.] His highest pride was to receive the approbation of his constituents and his friends; that, and that alone, would repay him [great applause.] Before he sat down, he would repeat the wish expressed in a neighbouring county, by a relative of their late valued representative, Lord Wm. Russell. It was this;—that the Crown might long enjoy its prerogatives, the peers their privileges, and that the people might speedily regain their rights—the right of controlling and checking their representatives in the House of Commons. The honourable gentleman concluded amid the applause of the meeting.

Mr. H. Sumner next addressed the meeting. He said that after the speeches they heard, it would be an extraordinary indulgence if they would listen to him [a voice in the crowd, "I think so, indeed."] No one more lamented the distress of the agriculturists than he did, but he believed he, in common with them all, were ignorant of the means of redressing it [cries of "No, no—we know what would lead to redress."] He had often seen the country in difficulties: but, from the force of discussion—from the acuteness and abilities of newspapers, the causes were ascertained and the remedies devised [a loud laugh.] They had five years of progressive suffering, and his opinion was, that if the meeting were divided into six classes, not two of them would agree on the cause of these sufferings [laughter; and cries of "We are all agreed."] Some imagined the distress to be over-production [loud laughter.] He was not of that opinion—the change in the currency, he believed, was one of the concurring causes of the dis-

treas. He was free to say, that of all the votes he ever gave [a voice in the crowd, "You never gave an honest one—a laugh"]—of all the votes he ever gave, he regretted the vote he gave upon that subject the most. Upon that subject he gave up his judgment to men of both parties [a laugh.] They were not to trace that measure to Ministers [laughter.] The late Mr. Horner, one of the ablest and most acute man of the day, drew the attention of Ministers to the subject, and forced the measure upon them. They were all subject to error, but he could say he always acted from conscience [a laugh.] A gentleman in the crowd had said in jest that he never gave an honest vote, but he was sure if that gentleman were called upon truly to declare what he thought, he would say that of all men in the House, he (Mr. Sumner) was most likely to give an honest vote [a laugh.] He was sure they all believed it [continued laughter.] Another cause of distress was the large importation of corn from Ireland; but they could not, and ought not to prevent that importation. Ireland had as good a right as Yorkshire or any other part of the country to send in her corn. Ireland was a part of the empire; it would be unjust, impolitic, and he might say impossible to prevent the importation of her produce. The honourable gentleman then went into a detail of the taxes that more particularly affect the land, county rates, poor rates, and other charges, which severely oppressed agriculturists. With respect to the other causes, he would only say, that he sat on a committee, who had to consider the cause of agricultural suffering, and out of the whole of the committee not more than three or four could agree in opinion as to the cause. He would say that Reform would not give a remedy [strong disapprobation.]

A voice in the crowd—Why act in the teeth of your constituents?

Mr. Sumner — I think I do not [a laugh!]. Reform afforded subject for declamation, but he had never known any man to devise a plan of reform [laughter]; he was a decided enemy to reform [disapprobation], because he thought that it would open a door to a scene destructive to their interests [laughter, and cries of "Off, off,"] and would be subversive of that constitution which they all affected to admire [laughter, and cries of "Off, off,"] If before he had doubts as to reform, that day confirmed those doubts—the expression of the noble lord (King) to pull down the houses of Parliament [violent and indignant cries of "No, no, his lordship said no such thing."]

Lord King stepped forward, and was received with the most animated cheers. He said, that the hon. gentleman was in error; his expression was, to pull down nuisances, and to reform the House of Commons, which supported those nuisances [applause.]

Mr. Sumner said, that by nuisances it was meant to abate the Parliament [laughter.] With respect to an equitable adjustment, the meaning of that was to give to the creditor two-thirds instead of the whole. The measures of that day, if not extended, would yet lead to a violent contact with the public creditor, and as an honest man he would never lend his hand to support them. He thanked the meeting for the kindness with which they had heard him [laughter.]

The High Sheriff then put the question on the petition, which was carried almost unanimously, there being but four hands raised up against it.—He then put the question on the additional words proposed by Mr. Cobbett, which were adopted by the meeting, there having been but the same number of hands held up against it.

Mr. Bennet then moved that five individuals should sign the petition on behalf of the meeting, which was agreed to.

Lord Ellenborough said, that at a meeting held about two years ago, the freeholders went to one side and those who were not freeholders to the other. He suggested that the same course should be now pursued.

A number of persons said that the

meeting was a meeting of inhabitants as well as freeholders.

Mr. *Cobbett* said, that the mode proposed by the noble Lord was not applicable; the present was not a meeting of the freeholders merely—it was a meeting of the freeholders, the inhabitants, and the occupiers of land [applause.] They were all sufferers—the labourer as well as the lord [applause]; and here he would avail himself of an opportunity to tell the noble Lord that he (Mr. *Cobbett*) once had a French Count to bind books—he bound many thousand volumes, and bound them very well [a laugh]; he brought home his work regularly every Saturday, and gave him much satisfaction. If the proposition which the meeting did him the honour to adopt—or something similar to it, was not acted on, he would see English Earls binding books yet [laughter and cries of hear, hear!]

Ld. *Ellenborough* stepped forward—

Mr. *Cobbett* objected to a renewal of debate.

Mr. *Bennet* moved that the Petition should be presented to the House of Commons by Mr. *Denison*, which was agreed to.

Thanks were then voted to Mr. *Denison*, and the honourable gentleman returned thanks. Thanks were also voted to those who signed the requisition, and to the High Sheriff, for his proper, dignified, and impartial conduct in the Chair. The honourable gentleman returned thanks, after which the meeting dispersed.

THE KING'S SPEECH.

[Omitted last week.]

My Lords and Gentlemen,

We are commanded by his Majesty to inform you, that since he last met you in Parliament, his Majesty's efforts have been unremittingly exerted to preserve the peace of Europe.

Faithful to the principles which his Majesty has promulgated to the world as constituting the rule of his conduct, his Majesty declined being party to any proceedings at

Verona which could be deemed an interference in the internal concerns of Spain on the part of Foreign Powers. And his Majesty has since used, and continues to use, his most anxious endeavours and good offices to allay the irritation unhappily subsisting between the French and Spanish Governments; and to avert, if possible, the calamity of war between France and Spain.

In the East of Europe his Majesty flatters himself that peace will be preserved, and his Majesty continues to receive from his Allies, and generally from other Powers, assurances of their unaltered disposition to cultivate with his Majesty those friendly relations which it is equally his Majesty's object on his part to maintain.

We are further commanded to apprize you, that discussions having long been pending with the Court of Madrid, respecting depredations committed on the commerce of his Majesty's subjects in the West Indian Seas, and other grievances of which his Majesty had been under the necessity of complaining; those discussions have terminated in an admission by the Spanish Government of the justice of his Majesty's complaints, and in an engagement for satisfactory reparation.

We are commanded to assure you that his Majesty has not been unmindful of the Addresses presented to him by the two Houses of Parliament, with respect to the Foreign Slave Trade.

Propositions for the more effectual suppression of that evil were brought forward by his Majesty's Plenipotentiary in the conferences at Verona, and there have been added to the treaties upon this subject, already concluded between his Majesty and the Governments of Spain and the Netherlands, articles which will extend the operation of those treaties, and greatly facilitate their execution.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

His Majesty has directed the estimates of the current year to be laid before you. They have been framed with every attention to economy; and the total expenditure will be found to be materially below that of last year.

This diminution of charge, combined with the progressive improvement of the Revenue, have produced a surplus exceeding his Majesty's expectation. His Majesty trusts, therefore, that you will be able, after providing for the services of the year, and without affecting public credit, to make a farther considerable reduction in the burthens of his people.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

His Majesty has commanded us to state to you, that the manifestations of loyalty and attachment to his Person and Government, which his Majesty received in his late visit to Scotland, have made the deepest impression upon his heart.

The provision which you made in the last Session of Parliament for the relief of the distresses in considerable districts in Ireland, has been productive of the happiest effects, and his Majesty recommends to your consideration such measures of internal regulation, as may be calculated to promote and secure the tranquillity of that country, and to improve the habits and condition of the people.

Deeply as his Majesty regrets the continued depression of the agricultural interest, the satisfaction with which his Majesty contemplates the increasing activity which pervades the manufacturing districts, and the flourishing condition of our commerce, in most of its principal branches, is greatly enhanced by the confident persuasion, that the progressive prosperity of so many of the interests of the country cannot fail to contribute to the gradual improvement of that great interest, which is the most important of them all.

NORFOLK YEOMAN'S GAZETTE

THIS is a weekly paper, published under my direction, and may be had in any part of the kingdom, as well as in Norfolk, by application to No. 183, Fleet-street, London. Those gentlemen that wishes to be furnished with a weekly paper, containing a true account of the state of affairs, a correct account of what passes in Parliament, and who wish to see the interest of the country maintained against that of the jews and jobbers, will, in this paper, find what they want.—It is necessary to make a stand against this band of marauders on the land and labour of the country; and if that stand be not effectually made, the fault shall not be mine. This vile horde, aided by a stock-jobbing press, and backed by the stupidity and the cowardice of a part of the landlords, are making a desperate struggle to get at the remaining resources of the country. At the time of the South Sea bubble, the town of Leicester prayed the House of Commons, "to prevent the last drop of the nation's blood from being licked up by *cannibals of 'Change Alley.*" So let us pray them now; for I am sure we are in greater danger than our forefathers were from the 'Change Alley cannibals of those days. Those cannibals were, comparatively, few in number. Our distressed, bleeding and dying state appears to have drawn together all the cannibals, from every part of the globe. To drive the monsters away from their prey, the Yeomen of Norfolk have made, at any rate, one bold attempt, and to assist in upholding them, in their laudable undertaking, is one of the objects of the Norfolk Yeoman's Gazette.

MARKETS.

Average Prices of CORN throughout ENGLAND, for the week ending 1st February.

Per Quarter.

	s.	d.
Wheat	40	0
Rye	22	3
Barley	28	0
Oats	17	0
Beans	25	7
Peas	30	4

Corn Exchange, Mark Lane.

Quantities and Prices of British Corn, &c. sold and delivered in this Market, during the week ended Saturday, 1st February.

Qrs.	£.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Wheat. 2,815 for	6,155	15	8	Average, 43	8
Barley. 3,314....	4,991	18	3	.....	30 1
Oats .. 3,830....	4,324	19	7	.....	22 7
Rye 20....	22	10	0	.....	22 6
Beans .. 902....	1,145	9	10	.....	25 4
Peas. 509....	796	18	1	.....	31 3

TO THE RIGHT ABOUT.—It is a singular fact, that more than 2,000 bushels of wheat have recently been imported from London to this city, and we are told that 5000 bushels are now on the way hither from Liverpool. We have seen a calculation, by which it appears that, after deducting the freight, insurance, and other charges, this wheat will yield a profit of 25 per cent.—*New York Paper*.

SMITHFIELD, Monday, Feb. 10th.

Per Stone of 8 pounds (alive).

	s.	d.	s.	d.
Beef	3	4	to	4 4
Mutton.....	3	6	—	4 0
Veal	4	4	—	5 4
Pork	3	8	—	4 8
Lamb	0	0	—	0 0
Beasts ... 2,186	|	Sheep ... 14,730		
Calves 141	|	Pigs 150		

City, 12 Feb. 1823.

A meeting of the principal Cheesemongers has taken place, for the purpose of taking into consideration the best mode of proceeding to protect the trade against the encroachments of the Irish mer-

chants and agents; and really this is not before it was wanted. For many years the short weight on Irish Butter, and the inadequate allowance for *tares*; as well as the discontinuance of the *just* practice of allowing for *taint* in Bacon, have been grievances to the Cheesemongers of such magnitude, that it is really surprising they have not been remedied before. The respectability of the gentlemen who have taken the lead on this occasion, is a sufficient assurance that something *effectual* will be done. There are a great many things that deserve their attention: for the present we will mention *one*; namely, the injurious act for regulating the size of the cask in which Butter may be sent from Ireland. This act was passed for the purpose of promoting a *particular interest*; and, accordingly it has been a *general injury*. It should be petitioned against, and its repeal obtained, during the present Session of Parliament.

BACON.

The manufacturers will not sell for less than 28s. on board: at that price some sales have been made. And as there is a general disposition to buy, we think it not unlikely that an advance will take place. The demand for *old* is increasing. New, landed, 30s. to 32s.

BUTTER.

The Dutch being expected, even the better kinds are bought sparingly. Upon the inferiors a heavy loss must ensue. Carlow, 80s. to 82s.—Belfast, 77s. to 78s.—Newry, 74s.—Dublin and Waterford, 70s. to 72s.—Cork and Limerick, 68s. to 70s.

CHEESE.

The stocks of Cheese have been gradually clearing off, and some kinds are now really *scarce*. Fine Double or Single Gloucester will advance very much, there being very little left.